



# ADA COUNTY

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Current West Nile Situation Prompts Emergency Declaration in Ada County**

*State of Idaho responds with plans for a statewide emergency  
declaration for impacted areas*

(Boise, ID) – Today, the Board of Ada County Commissioners formally declared a state of emergency as it relates to the current West Nile outbreak occurring in Ada County. The declaration came after the Commissioners heard current facts and figures presented to them by Brian Wilbur, Director of the Ada County Weed, Pest and Mosquito Abatement Department. Wilbur informed the Board of Commissioners that Idaho currently has the most reported human cases of West Nile in the nation and Ada County currently sits at Risk Category #5 -- the highest risk level outlined by the State of Idaho's West Nile action plan. A plan produced by the Center for Disease Control, and other similar West Nile plans produced by other states, also puts the current West Nile outbreak in Ada and other neighboring counties in the epidemic category. It is at this stage that most plans call for widespread aerial spraying to further contain human exposure to the virus.

**It is extremely important to note that this emergency declaration DOES NOT mean there is a current human health emergency taking place in Ada County. Today's declaration does prepare Ada County to receive state assistance, which Idaho Department of Homeland Security Director Bill Bishop said Governor Risch is ready to make available as soon as possible.**

"I made the motion to declare an emergency in Ada County because I want people to know how serious this situation is," says Ada County Commissioner Fred Tilman. "The information presented to us today indicates that by every standard, we have reached epidemic proportions for West Nile in Ada County. The Ada County Mosquito Abatement District is charged with the control of mosquitoes and the potentially deadly virus they may carry. By having an emergency declaration on the books, we'll hopefully be able to receive financial help from the state should the situation get any worse."

Currently, the Ada County Mosquito Abatement District monitors and controls mosquito populations at approximately 1740 bodies of water in Ada County. The district started the mosquito-monitoring season with approx. 1600 locations but that number has now grown as positive West Nile test results have become more prominent around the county.

“With every positive test that comes in, we increase our testing and treatment efforts in that area,” says Brian Wilbur, Director of the Ada County Weed, Pest, and Mosquito Abatement Department. “Our data shows that we are currently able to keep mosquito populations under control but our resources are being pushed to the limit. We’ll likely need to rethink our approach should the situation with West Nile get any worse.”

One option might include the implementation of aerial spraying to kill adult mosquitoes across the county. **THIS OPTION HAS NOT BEEN ORDERED AT THIS TIME.** The Board of County Commissioners has simply instructed the Mosquito Abatement District to research the costs and processes associated with this option **SHOULD THE NEED ARISE.**

Currently, Ada County has a crew of approx. 15 people monitoring and spraying locations day and night. The Weed, Pest and Mosquito Abatement Department takes an average of 70-phone calls a day from people asking questions about the West Nile virus and requesting an evaluation of their property. In June, the department launched its West Nile Surveillance Website that has become a valuable resource for the public. The website identifies mosquito trap locations that have tested positive for the virus and offers important information about precautions the public can take to safe guard themselves against West Nile. Since it’s launch, the website has gained the attention of other mosquito abatement districts around the country. Most recently, Umatilla County in Oregon asked for information as to how officials there could replicate the site in their area.

Ada County Commission Chairman Rick Yzaguirre said, “I am extremely proud of the actions taken by the Ada County Mosquito Abatement District to keep our residents safe. Their report today is proof that they are doing everything possible to keep this situation contained, but the mosquito season isn’t over yet and I support anything we can do as a county to prepare for whatever may come our way over the course of the next month and a half.”

“This isn’t just an Ada County issue,” said Commissioner Judy Peavey-Derr. “If you look at what’s happening just across the border in Canyon County, the situation is much more serious there. I would encourage counties to work together and consider our neighboring counties to consider moving forward with an emergency declaration in their jurisdictions as well. Should we ever need to consider the aerial spraying option, I believe it would be most effective if neighboring counties participated as well. Otherwise, we’re only treating a portion of the problem.”

Yesterday, Ada County reported 4 mosquito trap locations have tested positive for the West Nile virus. This now brings the current total of positive mosquito trap locations to 33 in Ada County. State Health officials indicate a total of 21 reported human cases of West Nile in Ada County. 22 positive tests have been reported in horses and 16 cases reported in birds.

The best way to safeguard yourself from being infected with the virus is to avoid being outdoors at dawn and at dusk when mosquitoes are most active. If you do have to be outside you are encouraged to wear an insect repellent with Deet; wear long-sleeve shirts and pants; and take measures to dry-up any standing pools of water around your home.

For more information about the West Nile Virus and the mosquito trap locations that have tested positive for the virus, log on to Ada County’s West Nile Virus Surveillance Website at: [www.adaweb.net](http://www.adaweb.net) and click on the link in the County Spotlight box.